

society for social responsibility in science

SSRS Newsletter

NO. 82

FEBRUARY 1959

"SANE NUCLEAR POLICY" IS URGED

Group Uses Advertisement in New York Times to Advocate Support of Geneva Conference on Halting Atom Bomb Tests

On February 13, 1959, a group of well-known scientists signed their names to a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* appealing for support of the Geneva three-power conference on ending atomic bomb tests. The advertisement took the form of an open letter to Mr. Eisenhower, Mr. Krushchev and Mr. Macmillan, urging an extra effort to make the Geneva negotiations a success. The open letter did not blame any of the three men for the apparent impasse, but stressed the need for a workable, equitably inspected plan.

The scientists, including Nobel-prize winners and SSRS members, were joined by a number of authors, religious leaders and peace workers in signing the appeal.

In addition to the appeal to the three national leaders, the advertisement listed reasons why the signers believe the United States Atomic Energy Commission and Defense Department are trying to "kill" the talks at Geneva by releasing misleading information which exaggerates the difficulty of a satisfactory test prohibition.

The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, the group which sponsored the ad, is an

organization formed somewhat more than a year ago by Clarence Pickett of the American Friends Service Committee and Norman Cousins of the Saturday Review. These men and others felt that there was need for a great effort to change American policy in the field of nuclear weapons, the present policy being thought suicidal.

ERICH FROMM SUGGESTS NAME

One of the early joiners was the famous psychoanalytic psychiatrist and author, Erich Fromm. The author of "Escape From Freedom", "The Sane Society", "Man For Himself" and other perceptive studies of our ailing civilization felt that in a real sense, present nuclear policies are *insane*, not related to reality. It was Fromm who proposed using the word "Sane" in the title of the Committee to emphasize the bizarre and unreal aspects of the policies it is sought to change.

A concerted effort is being made by the various Sane Nuclear Policy Committees in many cities during February and March, 1959, including publication of advertisements, letters to government officials,

and sending a delegation to visit policymakers in Washington.

REASONS ARE LISTED

Reason for making a special effort at this time is as follows, according to the sponsors:

First, an agreement to stop atom bomb testing is essential, not only to stop poisoning the atmosphere but to delay the spread of super-weapons to more and more countries; also, a bomb test agreement would be a first step, and other steps toward peace are unlikely if even this small step cannot be agreed upon.

Second, the Geneva Conference was originally called because of public demand; the governments will be more willing to seek a genuine solution if citizens continue to press for one.

Third, the Conference is in imminent danger of collapsing, partly because of Russian intransigence, but partly because some influential Americans never wanted to halt nuclear testing, regardless of the terms. These Americans are exerting great influence, particularly since the illness of Secretary Dulles, to scuttle the Geneva Conference; they can only be counteracted by a great outpouring of public opinion.

Thus (according to this analysis) world peace, and indeed the very survival of civilization, may depend upon a flurry of letters to Washington in March 1959, urging that the Geneva Conference be saved.

SSRS HAS NOT ACTED

The SSRS has taken no official position in this matter. However, the Newsletter is reporting the action of the scientist-signers in some detail, as an example of an action taken in accordance with conscience, by scientists with a sense of social responsibility. In line with this, page 3 of this Newsletter contains a reproduction of most of the *New York Times* ad.

Also, many individual members of the SSRS are active in Sane Nuclear Policy committees in their own local communities--including, readers should not be surprised to learn, the Editor of this Newsletter.

--T.K.

This Newsletter is published by the Society for Social Responsibility in Science, an organization of scientists and engineers whose purpose, according to its constitution, is "to foster throughout the world a functioning cooperative tradition of personal moral responsibility for the consequences for humanity of professional activity, with emphasis on constructive alternatives to militarism;...to embody in this tradition the principle that the individual must abstain from destructive work and devote himself to constructive work, drawing the line between the two according to his own moral judgment;...to ascertain through open and free discussion the boundary between constructive and destructive work to serve as a guide for individual and group discussion and action..."

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gigantic cultural exchanges, United World Government, etc., do not get popular support because people are afraid of communism, of being attacked, of subversion, or whatever.

4. This fear is deep and irrational. It cannot be helped unless it is faced head-on; bypassing it in favor of reasonable constructiveness will not take away its power. Part of the power of this fear comes from rational elements in it--the Communists really do intend revolution, for instance.

5. This fear is usually handled by further attention to military and "civil" defense. We who reject development of destructive types of "defense" can only counter the fear by reference to non-violent means.

6. The public is in no measure ready to accept the idea of any sort of non-military defense, but I believe they will accept the idea of research into non-military defense.

7. Therefore we should propose a scientific research project in this field. A proposal for defense research will not lead people to feel we are not "on their side."

8. This proposal must be for a large project, \$10⁷ or more, with many well-paid experts, because good pay produces good work. Many areas need to be covered; many groups of different backgrounds and presuppositions need to work in parallel.

9. The concept of "defense" itself generally boggles most pacifists and other reasonable people. While we have to start with it to gain acceptance, we must insist that to be properly scientific, all relevant questions must be asked, including that of what defense means, what we really should defend, and what the enemy is really like.

10. Many types of non-military defense can be proposed, from psychological warfare to diplomatic U.N. action to psychological direct-action peacemaking, to non-violent resistance against invasion. All reasonable possibilities should be examined.

11. Preliminary conclusions should be released to the press as suitable, so that members of the public can react and argue.

12. The Russians at present will not believe that we can be sincerely interested in disarmament for they expect us to be afraid of them, and in fact will feel defeated and impotent if we are not. Therefore they will believe us better if we have set up a long-range program of non-military defense, as an alternative to the weapons we may propose to give up.

13. The same conditions hold for American acceptance of disarmament plans.

14. The conflict between East and West, and our defensive plans can be maintained in a stable state if our method is one which will fail if the communist view of human nature and history is right, but will succeed if ours is. This assumes that in fact the two power centers will coexist for a long time to come.

15. A suggested name for the aims of this research might be "Post-disarmament defense."

16. An organization, or a committee of an organization, is needed if this idea is to get attention. The writing and speaking of W. T. Scott has so far resulted only in echoes.

William T. Scott
September 3, 1958

CONCLUSIONS FOR SSRS—W. SCOTT

The following paper was presented by former SSRS President William T. Scott at the 1958 Annual Meeting of the SSRS.

A CATENA OF CONCLUSIONS FOR SSRS

1. We need a positive, constructive approach.

2. We need an overall positive program, in addition to specific constructive proposals. In fact, all humanity shares this need.

3. General proposals like negotiations for complete disarmament,

ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Prepared June 9, 1958

Total membership 6/9/58	48
Full members	371
U.S.A.	316
Other countries	55
Associate members	64
U.S.A.	54
Other countries	10

1957-58

Losses through death, resignation	
New members	
Full members	47
U.S.A.	40
Other countries	7
Associate members	12
U.S.A.	12

--Esther L. McCandless, Chairman
Membership Committee

Mr. Eisenhower...Mr. Khrushchev...Mr. Macmillan

The Time is Now!

THE PEOPLE of the world have hopefully watched your representatives meet in Geneva. They have been heartened by the progress which has been made in writing a treaty to end nuclear weapons tests. The negotiations have brought us the first rays of light in the twelve years of darkness since the cold war began. The men meeting in Geneva have given us hope—hope that the dangers of radioactive fallout will not be increased in the years to come, hope that the world need not continue to drift toward extinction in a suicidal arms race.

But now many problems confront your negotiators. There are problems in the negotiations themselves. These questions require political and technical answers, but basically the difficulties are caused by mistrust and deep suspicions and need human solutions.

There are also obstacles being raised by those who do not want a test ban agreement.

The obstacles and problems are real; but surely they are small beside the dangers of radioactive poisoning, and mutual annihilation in a nuclear war.

In New York, radioactive fallout was up 25% in the first 8 months of the year, according to The New York Times in December. Los Angeles has been profoundlyalarmed about radioactivity and other cities have reported large increases. Sweden has announced unusually dangerous fallout. The report of the United Nations committee on the effects of radiation published last August declared, "Radioactive contamination of the environment resulting from explosions of nuclear weapons constitutes a growing increment to world-wide radiation levels. This involves new and largely unknown hazards to present and future populations..."

Today there are three nuclear powers. Tomorrow, unless the arms race is halted, France will be armed with nuclear weapons, and so will Germany. Traditionally neutral Sweden and Switzerland are considering nuclear arms. Communist China and countries of Eastern Europe will soon follow.

Today the missile race has just begun. By mid-1960, when missiles are hidden underground, inspection will be virtually impossible and the world will face a point of no return in ultimate peril.

With these developments, the dangers of nuclear war by accident or by incident will increase rapidly. For these reasons, it is possible that a nuclear test ban may be the world's best last chance to begin international arms control.

At the conference table the difficult questions of the functions of a control commission, of the voting procedures, and the nationality of staff members have created an

impasse. Surely if human understanding can harness the power of the sun and conquer space, human understanding is great enough to create solutions to these problems.

The reports from Geneva indicate there is to be a Control Commission, and an inspection system consisting of control posts and on-the-site investigation. Surely, whatever procedures are decided upon in the Control Commission, the inspection system itself must be free to operate automatically according to the technical requirements of the job it is given to do and not be subject to political obstruction.

Contention has developed over the question of the nationality of the staff for the inspection system. Since no country can be allowed to inspect itself, the staff should be international in character from countries acceptable to all members of the agreement and with sufficient observers from the host country to allay suspicions. Or, one-third of the staff could come from each side and from mutually acceptable countries, but no great power would serve.

It is very important to have a treaty which would depend on inspection teams and control posts and not only on words; a treaty which would bridge the gap of distrust and fear far outweighs the difficulties of finding solutions to these problems.

The problems will not be solved, however, unless a strong will exists in each country for reaching agreement. We are concerned about intransigence at the conference table. But we are also concerned about efforts to defeat that will, both here and abroad. Serious moves have been made to obstruct the talks by many forces in the world which are against a test control agreement.*

On October 31st, when the Geneva Conference began, an appeal was addressed to the conferees. It said, "We want you to feel that your job is to make this planet safe and fit for human habitation." In the months since then, a start has been made. There are many roadblocks in the way of an agreement. There will continue to be. But the price of failure may very well be the price of human life itself. The success of the Geneva negotiations is vitally important.

The responsibility for that success rests with you.

* Here at home, opposition to the United States position at Geneva has come from members of the Atomic Energy Commission and many persons in the Defense Department who have long opposed a bomb test ban. Now they have seized upon "new evidence relating to the detection of underground tests" from the series of tests the United States held in October last year. They have used this evidence in an attempt to exaggerate the difficulty of detecting underground tests to Congress and to the American people.

But Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Disarmament in a Senate speech on January 20th said, "Actually the data appear to indicate that in some respects it may be easier to detect nuclear tests than the Conference of Experts at Geneva had concluded."

And Dr. Hans Bethe, a member of the President's Science Advisory Committee said it is still possible to develop an effective atomic test inspection system.

The political judgments of the AEC and the Defense Department provide dangerous counsel for Americans and for the world. Time and time again this same weapons development group has misled the American people.

They have misled us about the "clean" bomb. No such thing exists or is likely to exist.

They have misled us about the pollution of our milk, our drinking water, air and soil by radioactivity from bomb tests already held. The level of Strontium-90 in milk continues to rise and is reaching significant levels in many cities. And it is our children who are the most strongly affected; radioactive strontium is being built steadily into their bones threatening them with bone cancer and leukemia. The United States Atomic Energy Commission in its recent statements has admitted that deaths are being caused by fallout, but they consider these deaths statistically insignificant.

They have misled us about tactical nuclear weapons and the risk of "limited" nuclear war. But General Lauris Norstad has said, "It would be extremely difficult to limit the use of atomic weapons. There would be a very rapid tendency for things to get bigger..."

And now we are being misled about underground tests. The New York Times reported on October 31, 1958, "The underground atomic explosion in Nevada today broke through the surface 'slightly'—a breakthrough had not been expected." Underground tests have not been "contained" as we have been led to believe, but have "vented" through fractures in the earth. They present new hazards of contamination to the water supply and air.

The AEC and Defense Department are vocally opposing the United States Government's acknowledged position at Geneva which is to reach an agreement ending all nuclear weapons tests. By recommending that we continue with underground tests, they have acted in a manner embarrassing to the United States in the talks.

Mr. Philip Farley, special assistant to the Secretary of State for Disarmament said on January 14,

"I want to state unequivocally that it is our objective to reach agreement on a treaty suspending nuclear weapons tests if provisions safeguarding U. S. interests can be negotiated. Such a treaty would be in the interests of the United States..."

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Michael Amrine
Science writer
Paul Shipman Andrews
Dean Emeritus, College of Law,
Syracuse University
Adelaide N. Baker
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Women's International League
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Cartoonist, creator of "Pogo"
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Co-author, "Radiation: What It
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(The signers of this statement do so as individuals and not as representatives of organizations or as members of the National Committees for a Sane Nuclear Policy, Inc. † indicates members of the National Executive Committee.)

Public Opinion — your opinion — brought about the conference in Geneva. Your opinion and your effort can increase the chances of success now. If you agree that it is time for a new direction in world affairs, if you agree that we should not seek the answer to world problems by courting world disaster, if you agree that your children and later generations should not be made to suffer for what we do now . . .

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT ON YOUR BELIEFS!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR A SANE NUCLEAR POLICY, INC.

202 East 44th Street, New York 17, N. Y.

What You Can Do:

- 1 Add your signature to the letter in the space provided below.
- 2 Send your contribution to help pay for this ad and others like it. Funds are *urgently* needed to expand the committee's efforts.
- 3 Join your local Sane Nuclear Policy Committee in its month-long activities in support of the Geneva Conference.
- 4 Write your own letters to the President, your Senators and your Congressman. INDIVIDUAL LETTERS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

LETTERS

To the Editor of the Newsletter:

For isolated members, at least, the Newsletter seems to me the most valuable enterprise of SSRS at present and perhaps for at least the near future. The fact that the Newsletter is small and packed with valuable information insures it a reading where a larger periodical might be scanned or bypassed. Its reports of those scientific meetings, resolutions and the like, which contribute to better understanding and cooperation across barriers, --these are creative in the highest sense.

But I find myself still wishing that someone would make it clearer *why* scientists can get together across all boundaries of nationality, creed, philosophy and ideology. To many people, science means only specialization, "knowing more and more about less and less." They never realize that the impelling motive of science is the search for truth, worldwide and universe-wide. Still worse, they do not realize what to us is a commonplace: the nature and use of theories, and the difference between theory and fact.

In other words, scientists have not only a moral responsibility to get together across all barriers but a responsibility also to help others see *why* this getting together is not only possible but is also perfectly logical.

Gerhard Hertz' letter, published in the September Newsletter, indicates, it seems to me, that even a Council member of the SSRS has not fully recognized the implications of the one great overall purpose

of science. Of course I understand that anyone living in Germany must feel the tremendous pressure of rival ideologies and nationalisms to an extent that we can hardly imagine; but does not that fact emphasize *our* obligation to make clear and hold high that universal vision which makes science great?

By creating adequate means of world communication and transportation, science has provided the machinery required for world understanding and cooperation. By this, war has been made historically obsolete. But there is still lacking the spiritual vision, the courage to think in new ways and shape new institutions, and to measure up to the challenge of moral responsibility for high adventure, replacing illusory "security." How shall this responsibility be put into words--clear and vital words?

Ada M. Field

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To the Editor of the Newsletter:

The Vienna Declaration is fully justified in stressing the urgent need for scientific education of peoples and their leaders on the complete folly of present-day wars; the necessity for extensive studies of the causes of wars, of human irrationality and aggressiveness, is also urgent.

The great power of science must be used more fully to aid people, instead of being partly turned against them. Less time must be wasted on bogus problems, while the many real ones need to be worked on objectively, not in the insanity of war.

Mrs. P. Cammer
RFD 4, Box 293
Huntington, N.Y.

EMPLOYMENT

The Occupation Division of the SSRS was created for the purpose of making it easier for scientists to act according to conscience when choosing their employment. If a man loses his job because of his attitude toward performing duties involving "destructive" work, or if he leaves a job because he is conscientiously unable to perform work he deems immoral, the SSRS Occupation Division may be able to help.

All correspondence regarding the printing of ads and replies to ads should be sent to the Occupation Division Chairman, M. Jane Oesterling, Woman's Medical College, Philadelphia 29, Penna. When a name is given in the ad for a direct reply, a copy of the correspondence should be sent to Jane Oesterling.

SITUATIONS OPEN

SENIOR TECHNICIAN OR JUNIOR ENGINEER with minimum 3 years experience, to assume responsibility for design and construction of medical electronic equipment. Salary commensurate with experience.

ENGINEER with Master's degree in mathematics needed for teaching position in Ghana. Write: H. Muensterman, Mission Board, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa.

MATHEMATICIAN for teaching post at Earlham College. Opportunity to help create imaginative curriculum. Ph.D. or near Ph.D. required. Write Howard Alexander, Department of Mathematics, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.

PHYSICIST--for full-time instructorship or assistant professorship at Wilmington College, Wilmington, Ohio. Ph.D. or near Ph.D. preferred. Address W. Brooke Morgan, Jr., Acting President.

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